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MARRIAGE.

591 It is proposed in this section to consider marriage from its social side, the religious aspect thereof being reserved for another paragraph. The most remarkable feature of the Khasi marriage is that it is usual for the husband to live with his wife in his mother-in-law's house, and not for him to take his bride home, as is the case in other communities. This arrangement amongst the Khasis is no doubt due to the prevalence of the matriarchate. As long as the wife lives in her mother's house, all her earnings go to her mother, who expends them on the maintenance of the family. Amongst the Khasis, after one or two children are born, and if a married couple get on well together, the husband frequently removes his wife and family to a house of his own, and from the time the wife leaves her mother's house she and her husband pool their earnings, which are expended for the support of the family. Amongst the Syntengs, however, and the people of Maoshai, the case is different, for with them the husband does not go and live in his mother-in-law's house, he only visits her there. In Jowai some people admitted to me that the husband came to his mother-in-law's house only after dark, and that he did not eat, smoke, or even partake of betel-nut there, the idea being that because none of his earnings go to support this house, therefore it is not etiquette for him to partake of food or other refreshment there. If a Synteng house is visited, it is unusual to find the husbands of any of the married daughters there, although the sons of the family may be seen in the house when they have returned from work. Generally in the day-time you will find in a Synteng dwelling an old crone, who is the grandmother, or even the great-grandmother, of the family, also grandchildren or great-grandchildren; but the husbands of the married daughters are not there. The Syntengs seem to have more closely preserved the customs of the matriarchate than the Khasis, and the Syntengs claim that their *niam* or religious ceremonies are purer, i.e. that they more closely correspond to what they were in ancient times than those of the Khasis. Amongst the Syntengs, occasionally, a widow is allowed to keep her husband's bones after his death, on con-

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589 765 dition that she does not remarry; the idea being that as long as the bones remain in the widow's keeping, the spirit of her husband is still with her. On this account many wives who revere their husband's memories, and who do not contemplate 587 765 remarriage, purposely keep the bones for a long time. If a widow marries, even after the customary taboo period of one year, whilst her deceased husband's bones are still in her keeping, [346] she is generally looked down upon. Her children in such a case perform the ceremony of handing over the bones of their father to his clan in a building specially erected for the purpose. The widow cannot enter therein, or even go near it, whilst the ceremony is proceeding, no matter whether the *jing sang*, or the price for removing the taboo after a husband's death, has been 595 paid to the husband's clan or not. There is no evidence to show that polyandry ever existed amongst the Khasis. Unlike the Thibetans, the Khasi women seem to have contented themselves always with one husband, at any rate with one at a time. Certainly at the present day they are monandrists. Polygamy does not exist amongst the Khasis; such a practice would naturally not be in vogue amongst a people who observe the matriarchate. There are instances, however, of men having wives other than those they have regularly married, and in the War country children by such wives enjoy rights to their father's acquired property equally with the children by the legally 582 688 764 married wife. As the clans are strictly exogamous, a Khasi cannot take a wife from his own clan; to do this would entail the most disastrous religious, as well as social consequences. For to marry within the clan is the greatest sin a Khasi can commit, and would cause excommunication by his kinsfolk and the refusal of funeral ceremonies at death, and his bones would [115] not be allowed a resting-place in the sepulchre of the clan. To 614 give a list of all the Khasi exogamous clans would perhaps serve no useful purpose, but I have prepared from information, kindly 582 furnished me by the Siems of Khyrim and Cherrapunji, a list of the clans in those States which will be found in Appendices A and B. These will suffice as examples. It will be seen from the Cherra list that the different divisions of the Diengdoh clan, viz. Lalu, Diengdoh-bah, Diengdoh-kylla, are prohibited from intermarriage; this is due to those branches of the clan being

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custom. In the Amwi doloiship a widow who consents to pay the costs of her husband's funeral, provided she agrees not to re-marry, inherits half of her husband's acquired property.

In the War country the children inherit both ancestral and acquired property in equal shares, both males and females, with the exception that the youngest daughter is given something in addition to her share, although not such a large share of the property as amongst the Khasis. Amongst the Mikir-Bhois, i.e. the Mikirs who inhabit the Bhoi doloiship of the Jaintia Hills, the law of inheritance is totally different from that of the Khasis, for males succeed to all property, whether ancestral or acquired. Thus, if a man dies, leaving son, mother, wife, and daughters, the son takes all. If there are several sons, they divide. If there are no sons, the property goes to the nearest male heir. If a woman dies, leaving husband and children, the husband takes all. If the husband is dead, and there are sons and daughters, the former inherit. The great difference in the custom of inheritance between Khasis and Bhois is, as I have already pointed out, part of the evidence that these people are of different origin.

The Lyngam law of inheritance is the same as that of the Khasis. The youngest daughter obtains the largest share of the ancestral property, the remainder being divided between the remaining daughters. The sons do not get any share. The rule is also said to apply with regard to acquired property.

ADOPTION.

Both Khasis and Syntengs observe a custom known as *'rap iing* (an abbreviation for *ia rap iing*, literally, to help the house). This is practically adoption. If in a family the female members have died out, the male members of the family are allowed by custom to call (*khot*) a girl from some other family, to act as *ka'rap iing*, and to perform the family religious ceremonies, and therefore to inherit the family ancestral property. The female so introduced into the family then takes her place as *ka khun khadduh*, or youngest daughter, and becomes the head of the house (*ka trai iing*). The